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Dear Albert:

W. H. Stettin

I've not yet had a chance to react to you about your 8/17 paper RECSpace.AUG

It is very good!

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My one comment: you are too defensive about arms races on p.4. My suggestion is to just drop it: it only provokes non-central reactions.

If you do want to talk about arms races, I would suggest a broader theory. We (or anyone else) allocate resources to arms in proportion to what we feel is the security threat, or to meet other national objectives. The other side's arms do augment that worry; and sometimes a specific innovation in arms will call for a response in kind. The level of buildup is also constrained by the economy. We could argue that neither the US nor USSR is capable of an exponential increase because we are already asymptotic: certainly within a factor of 2!!

If ASAT development could be constrained by arms control (and you should be elaborating the case why not: and go beyond the utility of ICBMs as ASATS) I doubt if overall arms expenditures would be influenced; but they would be shifted away from redundancy of vital satellites to other, then more pressing needs.

At some point, ASATs may reduce the odds of a stable mutual accommodation because of each side's continuing anxiety about vulnerability of its space-based I&W and C3I, and the high leverage of attacks on them. For that reason, if mutually enforceable ASAT-arms control were available, I would tend to favor it; but that does not seem realistic at this time.

I'm not really disagreeing; except for the tone. The audience you're trying to persuade needs a more sophisticated argument that honors their concerns.

Joshua

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(7) In fact, there hasn't been nor is there likely to be, in space any more than on earth, a "spiralling exponential arms race" with each side over-reacting to moves by the other side. Quite the contrary, the United States under-reacted to the growth of the Soviet ability to attack our satellites. It has not used passive or active means to develop robust systems of satellites that could survive such attacks; nor deployed an anti-satellite capability of its own, even though, in space as on earth, there is no basis for the claim that this would lead to an exponential race.

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